1: Swanton E-5 (1911-12)1928 NN11 Creek NN11

614 had once been laid aside. According to one writer the Wind clan could take them up an indefinite number of times; according to another, four times. This privilege is well remembered. A single writer adds that people of the Bear clan were allowed to take the clubs up twice, but I have been able to learn nothing definite upon the subject from the living Indians. Local privileges connected with the busk ceremonial were, of course, enjoyed by other clans.[a]

In other parts of America clan distinctions are indicated by means of face paintings or tattooings. With the Creeks, however, most of the latter seem to have had to do with war honors. I was told that members of the Raccoon clan painted circles about their eyes, but according to others this was done merely by doctors as a sign that they were able to see in the dark. Paintings used to indicate the towns of the persons using them will be considered presently.[a1a]

Another source of information regarding the position of clans in the tribe is still to be tapped, but in order to do this we must first set forth a description of the Creek ceremonial or busk ground, the religious and social center of every Creek community of consequence.

DISTRIBUTION WITH REFERENCE TO THE LAND AND THE TOWN

174 361 614 Both the Creeks and the Texas-Alabama have told me that anciently clans lived apart, and in a Creek story of the origin of corn they are represented as scattered about in a number of different camps. Whether or not the major clans are descended from bodies of people which once lived in separate towns and lacked exogamy the local separation of the clans until very late times is an undeniable fact. I may note here the assertion of one of my oldest and best informants to the effect that in olden times the clans were not exogamous, but that upon one occasion a council was held and it was determined that afterwards they should be considered such. This is interesting as marking the native recognition of such a possibility, not as proving that the change actually took place. The Creek towns in the times [361] when we begin to have knowledge of them consisted of a succession 592 of villages or neighborhoods scattered through the woods and along 614 the streams, and connected by a network of trails. The unit of such a town consisted of a group of houses owned by women of one clan and occupied by themselves, their husbands, and their young children. In practice it worked out something like this. A man, assisted by other members of his family or clan, might build a house in a new situation and clear the usual yard by hoeing up the surface weeds and grass for a considerable space about it. Now, when one of his daughters married her husband, drawn from some other, perhaps distant, locality, would build another house on part of the same

[a] Cf. also Milfort, Mém., p. 258. [a1a] See p. 246.

1: Swanton E-5 (1911-12)1928 NN11 Creek NN11

344 361

positions in respect to it. They also retain the central obelisk and the slave-posts."[74]

The use of the mound, while partly no doubt for defense and to add dignity to the structures placed upon it, was very often in order to protect the buildings from spring floods and the general dampness. Some earlier Spanish statements suggest that perhaps even in the sixteenth century not all public buildings were placed upon mounds. Yet by analogy with the Cherokee town house and the lower Mississippi temple we may consider it probable that the arrangement set forth by Bartram was actually a very ancient one. It would seem likely that the building called by Bartram the rotunda was once the most important element and that the public square was merely a summer substitute suggested by a southern climate. Such an evolution of the Creek public buildings would bring them into line with those known to have existed among the Cherokee and the tribes of the Mississippi. A later evolution changed the relative position of the elements here brought together and finally resulted in an almost complete elimination of the mounds. We will continue with Bartram's description of the later square (fig. 3) which remained essentially as he represents it almost to the present day.

[171 174]

344

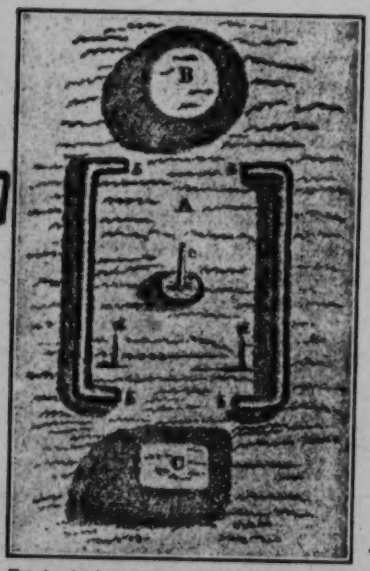

FIG. 2.—Ancient pattern of Creek Ceremonial or Busk Ground. (After Bartram.)

"This is the most common plan or arrangement of the Chunky-Yard Public Square, and Rotunda of the *modern* Creek towns.

"*A*, the Public Square or area.

"*B*, the Rotunda; *a*, the door opening towards the square; the three circular lines show the two rows of seats, sofas, or cabins; the punctures show the pillars or columns which support the building; *c*, the great central pillar, or column, surrounded by the spiral fire, which gives light to the house.

"*C*, part of the Chunky-Yard."[75]

[74] Bartram in Trans. Am. Eth. Soc., vol. III, pp. 51–53. [75] Ibid., p. 54.